

Editorial

Needed: The Harry Hopkins Principle

It doesn't take a rocket scientist, in the middle of the ongoing disintegration of the world economy, to understand that the \$800 billion gorilla which the Congress and the Obama Administration seem about to put through, is not going to solve the problem. As Lyndon LaRouche put it on Feb. 7, "This system is finished, the world, in its present form, is finished. We have this abomination, this abortion which was pulled off, or at least partially pulled off, this week, which, in a sense is a necessary diversion, which one hopes will give leg-room for actually doing something serious about the problem. But what Obama has done, will amount to *nothing more* than buying time."

The crucial issue that the administration continues to dance around, is *bankruptcy reorganization*. And it has to be addressed, and adopted, very soon.

In the context of taking out the garbage (the mass of unpayable, and largely fraudulent, derivative bubble debts), there will be a need for a jobs creation program, of course. The world economy is currently hemorrhaging jobs, with 600,000 lost in the American economy alone, during January. In total figures, masked, as usual, by failing to count those too discouraged to look for work, and forced to work part-time, the number of unemployed Americans has reached an estimate 22 million—more in absolute numbers than in the early 1930s. The International Labor Organization, a UN agency, estimates more than 50 million more jobs to be lost globally over 2009.

Popular "wisdom" (never to be trusted) holds that it will take months, if not years, to get millions of people employed. That's where the Harry Hopkins principle comes in.

President Franklin Roosevelt brought Hopkins onto his team in May 1933; his most stunning feat occurred that Fall. Faced by what he knew would

be the bitter Winter of 1933-34, Hopkins presented FDR, on Nov. 1, 1933, with a plan for a Civil Works Administration (CWA), to be run by his staff, which would initiate federally sponsored work projects throughout the nation, mainly projects of city, county, and state infrastructure, to be designed, planned, and proposed to the CWA by those government units. These included repair and construction of streets, roads, schools, public buildings, playgrounds, and parks, as well as flood control, sewage and water management, and much else of that sort. Roosevelt created the agency nine days after their meeting. Its budget eventually rose to \$900 million.

Hopkins employed 800,000 people on such worthwhile projects within ten days. Nearly 2 million were employed by two weeks later. Nine weeks after the CWA began—in the week ending Jan. 18, 1934—the CWA had its peak employment of 4,263,644.

Beyond preserving the lives and labor power of over 16 million Americans during a cruel Winter, CWA built and repaired over 40,000 schools and 255,000 miles of roads and streets; built 469 airports and improved 529 others; laid 12 million miles of sewer pipe; employed 50,000 teachers; and built 3,500 playgrounds and athletic fields.

CWA was followed by the work program of Hopkins' FERA (Federal Emergency Relief Administration), and that, in turn by his WPA (Works Progress Administration), whose operations were similar.

Today, the job categories will be somewhat different: progress on nuclear power plants, high-speed rail, and other jobs utilizing our dying machine-tool capability. But the Hopkins principle—mobilizing to defend our people as in war—is the standard we must meet today.